



Law and Justice Interim Committee

63rd Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

TERRY MURPHY--Vice Chair
SHANNON AUGARE
SCOTT BOULANGER
ROBYN DRISCOLL
LARRY JENT
SCOTT SALES

HOUSE MEMBERS

MARGARET (MARGIE) MACDONALD--
JENNY ECK
ELLIE BOLDMAN HILL
SARAH LASZLOFFY
STEVE LAVIN
DENNIS LENZ

COMMITTEE STAFF

RACHEL WEISS, Lead Staff
JULIANNE BURKHARDT, Staff Attorney
JOY LEWIS, Secretary

September 4, 2014

Legislative Audit Committee
Room 160, State Capitol
PO Box 201705
Helena, MT 59620-1705

Dear Chairman Brodehl and Members of the Legislative Audit Committee,

On behalf of the Law and Justice Interim Committee (LJIC), I am writing to respectfully request that the Legislative Audit Committee conduct a performance audit of the Montana Department of Corrections' (DOC) oversight of its contract with the Crossroads Correctional Center in Shelby (CCC). Based on information presented at the June 27th, 2014, LJIC hearing, I understand that your committee has prioritized performance audit projects for FY 2015 and that oversight of CCC was among the topics of interest to the LAC. I write to voice the LJIC's support for the completion of a performance audit on this subject.

The LJIC makes its request based on public comment received during the past two interims about CCC and also about DOC oversight of the facility. In particular, the LJIC heard concerns related to the staffing levels and patterns at CCC. Other comments focused on compliance with contract provisions related to medical care, mental health services, nutrition, hygiene, housing, and the use and oversight of inmate welfare funds. The LJIC also noted that the current contract between DOC and CCC is up for review in 2019, making the issue a timely one.

After discussion, the LJIC unanimously agreed that a performance audit of DOC's contract oversight work would provide valuable information to the LJIC and the Legislature as a whole as it considers what changes, if any, could be made to Montana's policy regarding private prisons.

The LJIC appreciates the time and attention the Legislative Audit Committee has already given this matter during assessment work performed in 2011. The LJIC believes a full performance audit would improve legislative understanding of CCC and current DOC contract compliance procedures and would benefit all legislators as they consider similar contracting issues in the future.

Sincerely,

Rep. Margaret 'Margie' MacDonald, Presiding Officer